

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for providing data storage capacity on demand comprising:
disabling a set of slot elements and data transfer elements of a data library disallowing
access to said disabled set by end users of said library;

- 5 partitioning at least a portion of a set of active data media storage slot elements and
active data transfer elements of said data library, exclusive of said disabled set, into
partitions for use by said end users; and
redefining said sets in response to changes in storage capacity rights of said end users.

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising reserving at least a portion of said
disabled set of data media storage slot elements and data transfer elements for present and
future use by one of said end users.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein said redefining step further comprises moving
at least one element of said second set to said first set in response to an order from one of said
end users for additional storage capacity.

4. The method of claim 3 further comprising :
charging said one end user for said additional storage capacity.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein said data library is controlled by a storage
service provider.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein said end users are customers of said storage
service provider.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising :
keying the number of elements in said first set on a license purchased by one of said
end users.

8. The method of claim 1 wherein said redefining step comprises:
moving at least one element of said second set to said first set in response to an order from said one end user for additional storage capacity and availability of said elements.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said availability is based at least in part on a license by one of said end users.

10. The method of claim 9 further comprising blocking said redefining step in response to said license lacking sufficient rights for said redefining.

11. The method of claim 9 further comprising extending licensed library capacity.

12. The method of claim 1 wherein said data library is physically located on a premises of one of said end users.

13. A method for providing data storage capacity on demand comprising :
reserving a set of data media storage slot elements and data transfer elements in a data library for present and future use by a customer;
disabling a subset of said set of slot elements and data transfer elements;
partitioning said reserved set into a subset of said set of slot elements and data transfer elements activated as a partition secured for use by said customer, wherein said subsets are exclusive of one another; and
redefining said partition by moving at least one element between said subsets in response to changes in storage capacity needs of said customer.

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising :
adjusting customer charges according to said redefining.

15. The method of claim 13 wherein said library is controlled by a storage service provider.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein said customer is a customer of said storage service provider.

17. A method for limiting access to data storage capacity in a data library, said method comprising :

disabling a set of slot elements and data transfer elements of said data library, disallowing access to said disabled set;

5 partitioning at least a portion of a set of active slot elements and active data transfer elements of said data library into partitions for use by one customer, wherein said sets are exclusive of one another; and

keying numbers of said elements in said partitioned set on a license purchased by said customer.

18. The method of claim 14 further comprising redefining said partitioned set by moving at least one element between said sets in response to a change in storage capacity needs of said customer and availability of said elements.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein said availability is based at least in part on a license by said customer.

20. The method of claim 19 further comprising blocking said redefining in response to said license lacking sufficient rights for said redefining.

21. The method of claim 19 further comprising increasing said license.

22. The method of claim 17 wherein said data library is physically located on a premises of said customer.

23. The method of claim 17 wherein said customer is a storage service provider.